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Larry King Live

A New Theory on the JFK Assassination
Valerie Bertinelli's Newest TV Venture

LARRY KING ..... Host

Guests:
MARK NORTH, Author, "Act of Treason"
JIM MOORE, Author, "Conspiracy of One"
KEN WALTON, Former FBI Deputy Assistant Director
VALERIE BERTINELLI

Senior Executive Producer ..... TAMARA HADDAD

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Transcribed by Lois Washington for Journal Graphics, Inc.

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A New Theory on the JFK Assassination

ANNOUNCER: Welcome to Larry King Live. Tonight: Did J. Edgar Hoover have a hand in the assassination of John F. Kennedy? Alarming new allegations about Government involvement in the death of a President. Plus, the latest life and career triumphs of actress Valerie Bertinelli. Now, here's Larry King.

LARRY KING: Good evening from Washington. Tomorrow night, Tina Sinatra will be one of our guests.

The assassination of John F. Kennedy 28 years ago next week is a lingering memory and, for many, an ongoing mystery. Millions still ask, "Who really killed JFK, and why?" Theories abound. The latest is a shocker. It places former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover in a conspiracy with the Mafia to murder the President. A lot of people say "No way" — fans of Hoover and backers of other theories — but the new hypothesis has a lot of others wondering.

Our guest is attorney and historian Mark North, author of the new book *Act of Treason*. It is published by Carroll and Graf. And in a little while we'll be joined by a former FBI agent — indeed, a former assistant deputy director — and another author who says it was Lee Harvey Oswald acting alone. But we begin with Mark North, author of *Act of Treason*.

First book, right?

MARK NORTH, Author, "Act of Treason": Yes.

KING: How did you come upon this story?

Mr. NORTH: With the 1979 findings of the House Select Committee, finding this conspiracy oriented towards the Mafia and then turning those findings—

KING: Hold it. Slow down. The House Select Committee said there was a fourth shot, right?

Mr. NORTH: Right, the acoustics—

KING: Did they say there was a Mafia conspiracy?

Mr. NORTH: The material in there strongly suggests that.

KING: But they didn't say that. They said there was a fourth shot.

Mr. NORTH: Right. Right.

KING: So how did you take that into Mafia?

Mr. NORTH: Because, when you start examining the data in there about the Marcello organization, the Traficanti organization and all the data coming up on the electronic surveillance programs that were showing this rising tide of hostility towards the Kennedys, that's what brought me into it.

KING: The Marcello organization out of New Orleans?

Mr. NORTH: Right.

KING: Traficanti out of where? Tampa?

Mr. NORTH: Miami, that area, Florida.

KING: OK, why were they upset at the President?

Mr. NORTH: Because Robert Kennedy had put their back to the wall and John Kennedy, as the President, was allowing Robert Kennedy and pressing Robert Kennedy to pursue this.

KING: And what information did you get to tie them into an actual plot — other than theory?

Mr. NORTH: The House Select Committee material on the Aleman data and the—

KING: The what?

Mr. NORTH: The José Aleman data out of Miami and the fact that he came forward in September '62 and, essentially, revealed that Traficanti had told him that there was a hit shaping up on Kennedy so— "He's not going to make it to the next election. He's going to be hit."

KING: Traficanti told that to José Aleman?

Mr. NORTH: Right, and José Aleman had been informed before, during, and after, and he was a very reliable man, and they vouched for his reliability. He had nothing to gain, and he told the *Post* that in '76, told the House Select Committee that.

KING: All right. Now, how does Hoover come into the picture?

Mr. NORTH: Hoover was— As the man in charge of the domestic surveillance, heavy surveillance programs on the Mafia, he picked this material up. He was in a box because Kennedy— For the first time, under Kennedy's Administration Hoover was going to be retired — compulsory retirement under federal statutes. John Kennedy was going to allow this to happen and Hoover had tried to— initially tried to blackmail Kennedy behind the scenes with the philandering. It failed. The opportunity arose with the Mafia data coming in that the hit was shaping up. Simultaneously, Hoover had compromised Johnson through the Billy Sol Estes and the Bobby Baker scandal that was shaping up and Johnson knew it, and Hoover saw the opportunity that, if John Kennedy were removed and Johnson replaced him in power, then Robert Kennedy would lose his power and Hoover could leverage a retirement waiver.

KING: Which he did.

Mr. NORTH: Which he did.

KING: The recent book about J. Edgar Hoover — a very critical book; the author was on this show — with all the research he did, how do you figure he didn't come upon this?

Mr. NORTH: As prior biography books on Hoover— When you're doing a single-volume biography on a man who is in power 50 years, these are highlight books. They catch the highlights in these things. And what happens with these, all the previous biographies — and I've looked at them — they get to the Kennedy era — the short time period that, even though it was short, there was all this intensity with the assassination material — and they have to get into that.

KING: What did you learn, though, that linked Hoover with the Mafia with the shooting?

Mr. NORTH: I believe, through the Beckley investigation in '61—

KING: '61?

Mr. NORTH: In June '61, when they broke up Marcello's gambling apparatus. The ties between that organization and—

KING: No, but I mean how do you link Hoover with the Mafia with

the killing — other than that Hoover didn't like him and the Mafia didn't like him? A lot of Republicans didn't like him. A lot of right-wingers didn't like him. A lot of people didn't like him. A lot of people loved him.

Mr. NORTH: Uh-huh.

KING: Why these two groups — Hoover and the Mafia? How do you hook— What's your evidence?

Mr. NORTH: My evidence? The fact that Hoover obtained this information through his surveillance programs that—

KING: How do you know?

Mr. NORTH: How do I know? Because, as I examined the House Select Committee material, these airtels that came to Hoover, the information that I studied, the FBI—

KING: All right, so Hoover got information that the Mafia was out to kill Kennedy?

Mr. NORTH: Yes.

KING: How would he hook that to November 22nd, 1963? I would imagine the Secret Service is getting information tonight about threats on George Bush.

Mr. NORTH: Well, yes, but—

KING: Right?

Mr. NORTH: Probably so.

KING: OK.

Mr. NORTH: I don't think that Hoover knew that it was going to happen on November 22nd in Dallas, but he knew that it was shaping up and immediately after the assassination all of the information that pointed to Oswald — the connection to David Ferrie, Jack Ruby — these were men known to the FBI. And Oswald's connections, Ferrie's connections—

KING: Do you think they set Oswald up?

Mr. NORTH: I believe they did.

KING: Do you think Oswald did the shooting?

Mr. NORTH: No.

KING: Did not do the shooting?

Mr. NORTH: No.

KING: Why was he running?

Mr. NORTH: Because I believe he panicked. Oswald had been used as an FBI informant prior to that time by the Bureau and I believe he had been set up, and he essentially realized— He thought there was going to be a protest that was probably going to occur on Deeley Plaza that day.

KING: And what was he doing with a rifle?

Mr. NORTH: I believe that was planted on him. It was his rifle, but it was taken from his garage. That was out of his possession for a long period of time and anybody could have taken that.

KING: So this was an elaborate plot by the Mafia that sort of— Hoover, if not involved in the plot — because he didn't know the day — looked away.

Mr. NORTH: Yes, his surveillance data told him, and the information that he had in his own files told him after the fact — very shortly

after the fact — that it was in fact that it would happen.

KING: He never gave that information to the Secret Service or to the President?

Mr. NORTH: No.

KING: OK, and you know he knew it?

Mr. NORTH: I—

KING: If he knew it, other agents had to know it, because someone had to pass it to him. I mean, he's not sitting listening to surveillance information.

Mr. NORTH: That's true, but he had a pyramid-shaped information flow system that concentrated— It was specifically designed to concentrate information, critical information, into his hands in exclusive fashion. Information could be put together at the different field offices. He wouldn't necessarily know— Agents at a given office wouldn't necessarily know what was shaping up.

KING: All right, because he may have gotten this surveillance— You don't know that he wasn't working on stopping it. You don't know that Dallas may have not been the hit. Maybe they were planning Hoboken two weeks later and Oswald did it in Dallas.

Mr. NORTH: Well, but all the—

KING: In fact, Hoover may have stopped a plot two weeks before.

Mr. NORTH: Well, it's possible.

KING: So I mean, how do you tie it to Dallas on November 22nd?

Mr. NORTH: Because of the tie of Oswald and Ruby back to the Marcello organization.

KING: You can put Oswald to the Marcello organization?

Mr. NORTH: Manipulation of him by the Marcello organization through New Orleans.

KING: OK, so Marcello knew Oswald?

Mr. NORTH: He knew of him. He was in there in New Orleans and Oswald had gotten the local publicity.

KING: And Oswald was also an FBI—

Mr. NORTH: Oswald was being manipulated by an ex-FBI agent named Guy Banister and a contract man who worked with him named David Ferrie.

KING: And you think Oswald was just a matter to be? He was in the slot?

Mr. NORTH: He was— Right, he was the man they chose and he was in the— He had the pro-Castro, pro-Cuba orientation that they wanted.

KING: We're going to take a break and when we come back we'll be joined by Jim Moore, author of the new book *Conspiracy of One* — he says it was Lee Harvey Oswald; and Ken Walton, a veteran of 24 years in the Bureau, three of them under J. Edgar Hoover, the last position as assistant deputy director. Later, your phone calls; later, Valerie Bertinelli. This is Larry King Live. We'll be right back.

[Commercial break]

Former President JOHN KENNEDY: *[Washington, D.C.; January 20, 1961]* And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country!

[Applause]

KING: Our guest here in Washington — Mark North, attorney and historian, author of *Act of Treason*. We're now joined by Jim Moore, who thinks there was no plot to murder JFK and says so in his book, *Conspiracy of One*. He joins us from Dallas — site, by the way, of a three-day symposium on the death of President Kennedy being attended by prominent assassination authors and scholars. We're also joined here in Washington by Kenneth Walton, former deputy assistant director of the FBI.

We'll start with Jim Moore in Dallas. What do you make of Mark's theory?

JIM MOORE, Author, "Conspiracy of One": Well, Larry, I've had a chance to review Mark's book and I've certainly heard a part of your discussion this evening. It seems to me that means, motive, and opportunity do not a case make and I think any good law student will tell you that the problem that Mr. North has is a problem common to critics of the official assassination story, and that is that there's no evidence to tie anyone except Lee Harvey Oswald to the crime. And the problem there, of course, is that you and I would have picked literally anyone else in the world besides Lee Harvey Oswald to set up for the assassination. He was the last person anyone would have picked as a patsy or a fall guy.

KING: Jim Bishop did a book also saying Oswald did it — I guess Jim's book came out 20 years ago — and he went back and retraced all the steps. But a query: I interviewed the police officer who arrested Oswald in the movie theater—

Mr. MOORE: Mac MacDonald [sp?].

KING: Mac MacDonald, and Mac told me that on the way to the jail in Dallas the only thing that Oswald said was, "I'm a patsy." He said that three times. What do you think he meant by that? He didn't say he was innocent. He said, "I'm a patsy."

Mr. MOORE: Well, I think you can go back to when MacDonald confronted him in the theater and Oswald jumped up and said, "This is it." He also said on the way to the police station, "Everyone will know who I am now." We know that he lied about very important, very substantial matters when he was in police custody, so the remark certainly doesn't surprise me.

KING: Ken Walton, former FBI assistant deputy director, worked with Hoover for three years — What do you make of Mark's thesis?

KEN WALTON, Former FBI Deputy Assistant Director: It's difficult to rebut the book because it's so absurd. It's factually incorrect, repeatedly—

KING: You read the book?

Mr. WALTON: I read the book.

KING: OK.

Mr. WALTON: And it was almost— It was difficult to read the book because you had the feeling that Peggy Lee was going to come out singing, "Where Are the Clowns?" because it's just factually incorrect. For example, there's no such thing as an encoded airtel. The structure that he set forth of the FBI in 1961 is wrong. The fact situation is wrong. And furthermore, if you were to put three guys together to

do a conspiracy, J. Edgar Hoover, Clyde Tolson, and Wesley Grapp [sp?] — You'd be further ahead to use the Marx Brothers because those three guys couldn't pull it off.

KING: Because — what? — Hoover was overrated as a police official or as a—

Mr. WALTON: Hoover would not have known Carlos Marcello, Santo Traficanti, or Frank Costello if they'd served him a ham sandwich. And to say, for example, the pyramid structure; the way the mail was handled, as the author says; that Mr. Hoover worked after 5:00 and perhaps did some of his own filing — J. Edgar Hoover never filed anything in his life. Now, he was a man, certainly, with faults, but stupid was not one of them.

KING: Was he very mad at John F. Kennedy?

Mr. WALTON: Oh, absolutely.

KING: Didn't like him?

Mr. WALTON: Didn't like him; but he didn't like Harry Truman either but he didn't enter into a conspiracy to kill him.

KING: And he wouldn't know Traficanti— In fact, one of the arguments against him was that Hoover didn't come down tough on organized crime; that he didn't know these people.

Mr. NORTH: Well, he knew a lot about organized crime, but he essentially used it. He used it as a source and he was not going to step on people's toes. People were involved in paying off politicians.

Mr. WALTON: Hoover knew nothing about organized crime — nothing.

Mr. NORTH: What about the meetings with Frank Costello in the park in New York?

Mr. WALTON: How can you say that the Mafia would whack President Kennedy when recent information indicates that Sam Giancanno bought Chicago for him? Isn't that something of a problem?

Mr. NORTH: The investigation on Giancanno may have been compromised by the campaign contributions, but that doesn't have anything to do with Marcello and Traficanti. My book has over 2,300 individual citations, 170 different sources based on the records that were compiled over the decade and my research—

Mr. WALTON: And most of the sources you used are books by disgruntled former FBI agents that are filled full of apocryphal stories, the bulk of which aren't even true.

KING: Are you saying this is too big? If Hoover were involved in something like this a lot of other people would have had to know it?

Mr. WALTON: Well, to start with, on something like Marcello— Santo Traficanti and Marcello could not pull off a hit like this. Those two guys couldn't find a ham sandwich in a phone booth.

KING: Do you believe it was Oswald acting alone?

Mr. WALTON: Absolutely. Absolutely, and furthermore, that information— To crank in Wesley Grapp, who was the SAC— If there was ever an individual who would not engage in a conspiracy, Wesley Grapp is a guy who wouldn't. Besides that, it would be disseminated locally.

KING: Did you talk to people at all, Mark, who debunked the theory? If you only went one track then you wouldn't be doing the in-

vestigation, so why didn't you talk along the way to Ken or other agents to give you information contrary?

Mr. NORTH: I examined a lot of the House Select Committee material. There's a lot of information there that looked at the FBI, including Mr. Grapp's activities in 1967 in the balling up of the Marcello-Becker death threat that was about to surface — things of this nature. I looked at the entire spectrum.

KING: You realize this would be an incredible story?

Mr. NORTH: I believe that—

KING: The head of the Federal Bureau and gang lords murder a President.

Mr. NORTH: He had Johnson compromised. Hoover was the classic case of a man who had absolute power and stayed too long and, in the end, he was determined to use any means at his disposal to perpetuate himself. And he was not about to let himself be retired by a man he considered to be an indecisive, immoral liberal like John Kennedy, and my book shows that.

Mr. WALTON: It would seem to me that saving the President's life would almost ensure that he would keep his job, as opposed to letting him be killed. Again— First of all, the information, if it was obtained in Miami, would have been disseminated to the Secret Service locally.

Mr. NORTH: What about all the information that came in to Hoover in Kennedy's file, in his confidential files, about Kennedy's activities? Hoover, there was this—

Mr. WALTON: I saw Hoover's files then and I saw him on a — you know, in a work environment — and let me tell you, things did not get in to J. Edgar Hoover.

KING: They didn't?

Mr. WALTON: They did not.

Mr. NORTH: That's not—

KING: Do you think, Jim, one of the problems is that it's just hard to accept that one lonely desperate kind of guy could pull this off?

Mr. MOORE: Well, I think that's really the central difficulty, Larry. There's a certain air of inevitability about the assassination. If it were a conspiracy, if the conspirators missed down on Elm Street, they would have succeeded somewhere else.

KING: We'll be right back with Jim Moore, Mark North, and Ken Walton. We'll be taking your phone calls.

Later — Valerie Bertinelli. This is Larry King Live in Washington. Don't go away.

[Commercial break]

Former President KENNEDY: *[Berlin, Germany; June 26, 1963]* All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words, "*Ich bin ein Berliner*!" *[Applause]*

KING: Our guests are Mark North, author of the book *Act of Treason*; in Dallas, Jim Moore, author of *Conspiracy of One*; and also here in Washington, Ken Walton, who served in the FBI for 24 years, three under J. Edgar Hoover, is now in the private consulting business and was an assistant deputy director of the FBI.

We'll go to your calls. Uniondale, New York, hello.

1st CALLER: *[Uniondale, New York]* Hello. Mr. North, I'd like to know is there any connection between Judith Exner, Hoover, and, I guess, Traficanti or whoever?

Mr. NORTH: Well, Judith Exner — Judith Campbell [sp?] — she was involved with Giancanno and simultaneously involved with John Kennedy, and that may well have compromised the Justice Department investigation of Giancanno in Chicago.

KING: Any comment on that?

Mr. WALTON: No, that's certainly true. There's no doubt that she was associated both with Kennedy and with Giancanno and— Yes.

KING: To Marco Island, Florida. Hello.

2nd CALLER: *[Marco Island, Florida]* Hi, Larry. How're you doing?

KING: Fine.

2nd CALLER: I hope to see you doing some "Tomahawk chops" this spring.

KING: Thank you.

2nd CALLER: OK, I have a two-part thing. I would like to ask the gentlemen— Mr. North, I agree with his theory, but in his research did he happen to come across a book — it was, like, a memorial book that came out. It was called *The Torch Is Passed* [sp?] and it clearly showed that when President Kennedy was shot through the throat Lee Harvey Oswald was standing in the doorway of the book depository, so that kills the FBI agent's and the other guy's story completely.

KING: I think that's— Well, I think we'd better have Jim comment on that. There was a picture of someone who looked like Lee Harvey Oswald in the doorway, wasn't there?

Mr. MOORE: Well, that's true, Larry. The individual in question was Billy Nolan Lovelady [sp?], who was also a depository employee. Subsequently, the House Select Committee analyzed the Atgins [sp?] photograph — that particular picture — and determined that, in fact, the man in the doorway was Mr. Lovelady. So the assassination sensationalists have used the same claim over the years but, again, there's nothing to it.

KING: So your contention, Mark, is that Hoover got all this information and, while not an activist, didn't do anything with it?

Mr. NORTH: Right, he realized that if he withheld this information from Secret Service and the proper authorities that the likelihood of its succeeding would be increased tenfold.

KING: Didn't a lot of agents then start to question him after this occurred?

Mr. WALTON: He couldn't have withheld it because by the time it ever got to him it would have been disseminated locally at Miami.

KING: In other words, they would automatically disseminate it?

Mr. WALTON: Absolutely.

KING: If the FBI today gets a call in Atlanta with a possible threat to Bush, or they learn of a threat on Bush—

Mr. WALTON: The very first thing you do is you contact the local Secret Service, which is exactly what was done there.

KING: And you would do that before you'd even tell Mr. Sessions?

Mr. WALTON: Absolutely. Absolutely.
KING: Back to the calls. I didn't get the city, but hello.
Salem, Oregon, hello.
3rd CALLER: *[Salem, Oregon]* Hello, Larry.
KING: Hi.
3rd CALLER: For the two gentlemen who cling to this single-gunman theory, medical evidence shows that the President's body was altered prior to the autopsy. How can they cling to a single-gunman theory when that would have needed more people to be involved?
KING: Jim?
Mr. MOORE: Well, Larry, the President's body was not altered prior to autopsy. It's a last-ditch effort on behalf of the critics of the official version to say, "Well, there certainly was evidence of crossfire and a conspiracy before we covered it up." What the medical evidence shows is that all the shots which hit the President and Governor Connally were fired from behind and above, from a single gun, presumably, and that makes it a conspiracy of one, not of many.
KING: It's your contention, also — isn't it, Ken? — that, while J. Edgar Hoover may have had his problems and some idiosyncrasies, he was a patriot, right?
Mr. WALTON: Oh, absolutely.
KING: So he could never have conceived of doing something like that.
Mr. WALTON: And also, very importantly, he was not stupid. And to do something like this would be stupid and just patently, the way the Bureau operated, it couldn't be done. About the only thing that's missing here in this whole theory is Elvis.
KING: Mark?
Mr. NORTH: Now, I spent over five years putting this thing together—
Mr. WALTON: And not well. *[laughs]*
KING: Did you read the book?
Mr. NORTH: Well, obviously, you have a natural bias here and you—
Mr. WALTON: No, no—
Mr. NORTH: —and you were only with Hoover the last three years and the agency was radically reformed after that. You were not there in the early 60's when all this was occurring.
Mr. WALTON: I was there from '65 until he died in 1970—
Mr. NORTH: So you were there after— in '65, after this information would have been used—
Mr. WALTON: I was there for five years with him, yes.
Mr. NORTH: —and it would have been destroyed.
KING: I'd like to do this, for my part — read both these books, Jim's and Mark's, and then have you all back and get into this from a standpoint of knowing a lot more about it.
Jim, your book is out right now, right? *Conspiracy of One*?
Mr. MOORE: It is, Larry. It comes out in paperback next week.
KING: From the Summit Group?

Mr. MOORE: In Forth Worth, Texas.
KING: All right. And Mark North's book is *Act of Treason* from Carroll and Graf; and Ken Walton is based right here in Alexandria.
Mr. WALTON: Yes, sir.
KING: Thank you all very much.
Mr. NORTH: Thank you.
KING: This anniversary — if "anniversary" is a correct word — is next week.
We're going to pause and when we come back Valerie Bertinelli is with us — America's junior sweetheart. Don't go away.
ANNOUNCER: Coming up: A new television movie from America's favorite kid sister — Valerie Bertinelli.
[Commercial break]

Valerie Bertinelli's Newest TV Venture

KING: She was just a kid when she hit it big in the 70's on the hit series *One Day at a Time* and now she's a full-time mother — hard to believe — but Valerie Bertinelli still finds time for television. She stars in the CBS miniseries *In a Child's Name* which begins this Sunday night at 9:00 P.M. It's based on the true story of a woman who battles for custody of her slain sister's infant son. Valerie Bertinelli joins us from our studios in Los Angeles.
How do you like "mom-ism"?
VALERIE BERTINELLI: Oh, God, it's the best thing in the world. I never could have imagined.
KING: It's a little "he," right?
Ms. BERTINELLI: Pardon?
KING: You have a "he"?
Ms. BERTINELLI: Yes, a little boy — Wolfgang William.
KING: Wolfgang William?
Ms. BERTINELLI: Uh-huh.
KING: Why did you—
Ms. BERTINELLI: And he'll be eight months old on Saturday.
KING: Why did you do that to him, Valerie? Why "Wolfgang"? For what purpose?
Ms. BERTINELLI: *[laughs]* Because we're Mozart fans, and with a last name like "Van Halen" it's a little hard to go with something like — I don't know —"Joe Van Halen," or something. It had to be — I don't know — interesting— not that "Joe" isn't interesting, but—
KING: So his full name is—?
Ms. BERTINELLI: Wolfgang William Van Halen.
KING: Sounds like it needs "the III."
Ms. BERTINELLI: Pardon? I can't hear you that well.
KING: It sounds like it needs "the III" after that—
Ms. BERTINELLI: Oh, right, right. *[laughs]*
KING: People, I guess, would have difficulty picturing you as a mother, Valerie, because you'll always be that kid sister from that show. How old are you now?
Ms. BERTINELLI: I'm 31.